

FROM THE FIELD

B I M O N T H L Y N E W S L E T T E R

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US Peace Corps in Ukraine

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SUMMER CAMPS

CONCERTS ARE RAISING MONEY
A SUMMER-SCHOOL STORY
in Ukraine

TOBE and GLOW SUMMER CAMPS

This year, PC Working Group GAD (Gender and Development) held Camps GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) and TOBE (Teaching Our Boys Excellence). The camps were held in Kolomiya, Ivano Frankivska Oblast, near the Carpathian Mountains. About 40 teens and 11 volunteers from various parts of Ukraine participated in the two camps. The camps were similar in structure, but were held at different times. TOBE was held July 1 to July 6 and GLOW was held July 7 to July 12. The camps consisted of sessions, excursions, and games. The camps were held entirely in English (of course, Ukrainian/Russian were used when needed!). Topics covered in the sessions included human trafficking, violence against women, HIV/AIDS, leadership, healthy lifestyles, decision making, future planning, and the environment. The final session included a review for students to practice teaching their peers in their communities about all of the topics they discussed at the camp. One day, participants went on excursion to Shepherd's Valley. The participants climbed up a hill (it was a tough hike!) and, at the top, visited shepherds who live in the mountains all summer and tasted their cheese. It was delicious! Afterwards, participants climbed down and had a swim in a mountain river. The last day of the camp participants climbed Mt. Hoverla, Ukraine's highest peak. On the way down, the boys in Camp TOBE picked up all of the trash. They did such a good job collecting garbage that there was almost none for the girls to collect the following week! Other activities included camp games like

"human web" (passing participants through a web), an egg race, and "human knot." Participants also were able to experience cross-cultural activities like tie-dying T-shirts, singing American songs, and roasting marshmallows for s'mores.



■ Cyber games: 'Human Web'



"THIS CAMP
HELPED
CHANGE THE
WAY I THINK"

■ High in the mountains:
climbing Hoverla



At the end of each camp, campers wrote thank you letters to every donor of our Peace Corps Partnership Grant, which funded most of the camp. Students also did fundraising projects before the camp in order to contribute to camp costs. At the beginning of the camp they presented their projects and, hopefully, gave each other ideas for future projects. Some examples of these projects were selling scrap metal for recycling, holding a day camp for younger students and a raffle for an American dinner with campers' PCVs. Students also filled out evaluation forms and the PCVs leading the camp received very positive feedback from the campers. Messages like "This camp helped change the way I think" or "I learned about things I can't ask my parents (i.e. about HIV/AIDS)" were very common responses. In the end, campers had a homework assignment: write a letter to President Yushchenko about anything they feel passionate about. Maybe their message to the President can make a difference in their country just as this camp seems to have made a difference in their lives.



GLOW:
Girls Leading Our World!

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Well done: no more trash
in the mountains

RAISING MONEY: from concerts to sewing bags

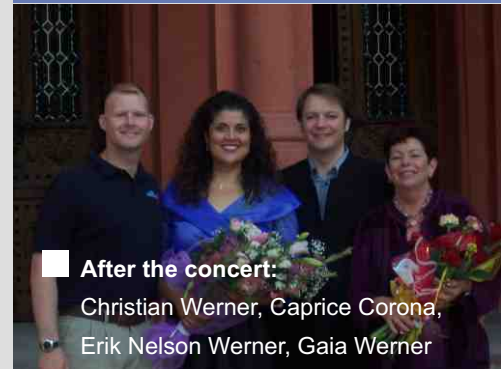
Gaia Werner was assigned to the Medical Social Rehabilitation Center for Handicapped Children "Doroha Zhyttja" (Road of Life) in Uzhgorod, Western Ukraine.

Gaia and her NGO are currently working on a project to provide skills training and income to a group of disabled youth in Uzhgorod. With a SPA grant from the US. Peace Corps, they have purchased two professional sewing machines and hired a Sewing Master. They found fabric at a discount if they bought a kilometer of it so they have enough to make 8,000 fabric shopping bags which will be decorated with a logo of Uzhgorod and sold as tourist souvenirs as well as practical, environmentally reusable carry-alls.

Gaia does not limit her activities to one community only. Two American professional opera singers sang benefit concerts on July 4 and 11 in Uzhgorod and Kyiv, Ukraine to raise money for a Rehabilitation Center. The artists, Ms. Caprice Corona and Mr. Erik Nelson Werner, came at the invitation of Gaia Werner, who happens to be Mr. Werner's mother.

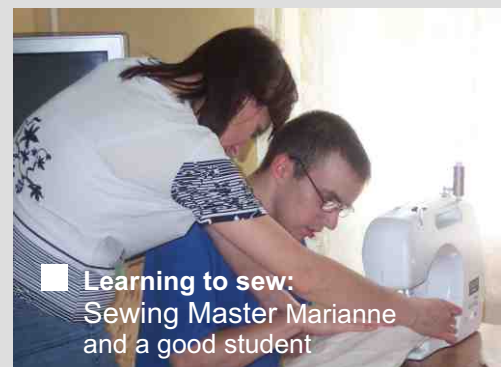
About 400 music lovers attended the concert in Uzhgorod. It was supported by local businesses, including an ad agency that donated the posters and tickets, a local hotel that gave them two rooms for the price of one, two restaurants that donated meals, a grocery store and catering firm that jointly donated the post-concert reception for the artists, as well as corporate donations from several local businesses. The concert raised almost 10,000 hryvnias (\$2,000) for the rehabilitation center.

The concert in Kyiv was attended by the American Ambassador to Ukraine and the Peace Corps Country Director. It was covered by 3 television stations and 6 newspapers, generating good press for the Peace Corps and the status of culture in the United States. This concert was held in a small but elegant theater in downtown Kyiv and was supported by two local restaurants, a firm that rents apartments as well as the theater, which discounted their normal rental fee. While approximately 3500 hryvnias (\$ 600) was raised, the concert was considered successful based on the positive image projected into the community.



■ **After the concert:**
Christian Werner, Caprice Corona,
Erik Nelson Werner, Gaia Werner

GAIA IS DOING
MANAGEMENT
CONSULTING
AND
FUNDRAISING
FOR HER NGO,
WHICH
PROVIDES
SOCIAL AND
MEDICAL
REHABILITATION
THERAPY TO
160 MENTALLY
AND
PHYSICALLY
CHALLENGED
CHILDREN.



■ **Learning to sew:**
Sewing Master Marianne
and a good student

A Summer-School Story in Ukraine

The story of “Teaching Language Through Culture: A Summer School for Teachers” begins with a hearty rainstorm and a keynote address by Peace Corps Country Director Diana Schmidt.

Focusing everyone’s attention on how humans perceive the world according to what they know and who they are, Diana Schmidt drew from her varied cultural experiences to elaborate on the tale of “Three Blind Men and an Elephant.” Between 19 and 23 June 2006, eighty Ukrainian secondary-school and university teachers of English, six Ukrainian presenters, and twelve Peace Corps volunteers shared their *own* perspectives as they explored the English language and how to teach it. Using spheres such as love, home, family, education, the arts, community, recreation, environment, the workplace, and the marketplace, they engaged in a cultural adventure. “We opened a new page in [how we see] the life of American people,” said a teacher after watching clips from “The Joy Luck Club.” “Crossing cultures is not always so dramatically difficult!” observed a participant who attended a session on advertising. “I got a lot of ideas for bringing up my own child,” a teacher wrote, after a presentation on the diversity of American families.

Teachers also found resources for their classrooms. Through role plays, dialogues, readings, games, dramatic performances, and networking activities that included writing poems, creating posters, imagining the future, and keeping a journal, they discovered new ways to make English come alive for their students. They discussed democracy, censorship, culture shock, moral dilemmas in literature, why trash is everyone’s problem, and even the magic of baseball.

Outside the classroom, participants attended concerts, watched a wordless film, and took walking tours of Zhytomyr. They attended a silent-auction the proceeds of which will help fund next year’s summer school for teachers at Zhytomyr State University. A variety of cultural items donated by Ukrainians and Americans (CDs, live plants, embroidered cloths, maps, catalogs, books, key chains, dolls, Hershey’s kisses) raised \$200 and garnered rave reviews. Wrote one participant: “It was great fun! A new, thrilling experience and quite a success! Hurrah!”

On a clear Friday afternoon, a group of participants used the phrase “winds of change” to describe what they learned about English-language teaching during the summer school. A teacher from Vinnitsa heading to the bus station, carried her certificate of attendance in one hand and the taste of culture she’d “won” at the auction in the other. “My husband will be so happy with this jar of peanut butter!” she said. The story ends here with a breeze, sunshine, and thoughts of food. Some things transcend language.



Delivering keynote address:
PC Ukraine Country Director
Diana Schmidt

THROUGH ROLE
PLAYS,
DIALOGUES,
READINGS,
GAMES,
DRAMATIC
PERFORMANCES,
AND
NETWORKING
ACTIVITIES THAT
INCLUDED
WRITING POEMS,
CREATING
POSTERS,
IMAGINING THE
FUTURE, AND
KEEPING A
JOURNAL, THEY
DISCOVERED
NEW WAYS TO
MAKE ENGLISH
COME ALIVE FOR
THEIR
STUDENTS.



Sharing their
learning experiences:
participants of the summer school



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FROM THE **FIELD**
BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER



US Peace Corps
in Ukraine